

Lawmakers accomplished a lot this session. Here is a very brief snapshot of just some of our successes this year.

Session scorecard for education

Giving children a strong, early start

Early learning is one of the smartest investments we can make. We passed a comprehensive package of legislation and approved funding to add 2,000 more children to the state's preschool program, create a voluntary rating system of early learning providers, and more.



Helping all children succeed

From kindergarten to college, we passed several bills to help students meet the high standard, graduate on time, and continue their education after high school. Legislation included:



- phasing in voluntary all-day kindergarten, starting with high-poverty schools;
- investing in after-school programs for low-income and at-risk students;
- expanding financial aid opportunities and making room for thousands more students in our state colleges.



Supporting excellent teachers

To recruit the nation's most highly-qualified teachers, we passed a bill to award \$5,000 annual bonuses to teachers who attain National Board Certification, and additional \$5,000 bonuses for those who teach in high-poverty schools.

We also fully-funded voter-approved Initiative 728 to reduce class sizes, as well as Initiative 732, to compensate teachers with cost-of-living salary increases.

Leveling the playing field for school levies

We passed a bill asking voters to amend the state Constitution to allow school levies to pass with a simple majority. Currently, levies must receive 60 percent of the vote to pass, and can fail even if they receive as much as 59 percent of votes cast. You'll see this measure on your November ballot.

Other successes



Insuring Washington children

We extended health coverage to 39,000 uninsured children, making progress toward our goal of providing all children with health insurance by 2010. Preventative care helps children lead healthier, more productive lives and reduces costly emergency room visits.

Prescription drug program

Starting this year, Washington residents can save up to 60 percent on prescriptions through the new Washington Prescription Drug Program (WPDP). The WPDP is free. Apply at <http://www.rx.wa.gov/> or by calling 1-800-913-4146.



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48th Legislative District 2007 SESSION REPORT



Dear Neighbors,

The 2007 legislative session is over and it's great to be back in the district. Thank you to all who contacted our offices to let us know your thoughts on issues this session.

All of us had new roles to play this year. This was Deb's freshman year in the Legislature, and she served as vice chair of the House Local Government Committee. Ross took on a new leadership position as Chair of the House Finance Committee, and Rodney moved from the House to serve as a freshman Senator, and vice chair of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

We hope you'll take a few moments to read about how we represented you, and let us know if you have any ideas for things we can work on for the 2008 session. Since we're back in the district, you can call, e-mail or even drop by our district office for a visit. We always enjoy hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Rodney Tom

Rodney Tom

Ross Hunter

Ross Hunter

Deb Eddy

Deb Eddy

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Rep. Deb EDDY



Crane safety bill responds to Bellevue tragedy

In the wake of the tragic accident in downtown Bellevue last year, many of us were surprised to learn that construction cranes are not regulated in this state. Besides the loss of property, Matt Ammon tragically lost his life in the 2006 accident. Think of what could happen if one of these cranes fell onto a busy shopping mall or office building during normal business hours!

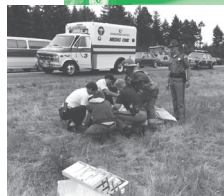
While we require 1,500 hours of training before we allow someone to cut hair, we have had absolutely no requirements for the siting or operation of these multi-ton cranes towering over our downtowns.

I was privileged to craft and sponsor a bill that brought together state agencies, unions and private interests to ensure cranes will be safely sited and safely operated. While broad regulatory efforts can take years to get through the Legislature, we passed House Bill 2171 in just one legislative session.

Eastside 911 dispatch secured

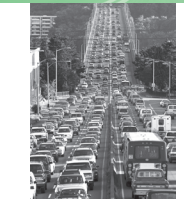
All of the cities and special districts on the Eastside are working to consolidate their 911 emergency dispatch services, which will result in improved coordination and response times in any and all emergencies, including disasters like last year's severe windstorm.

I worked hard to secure \$750,000 through the state's Capital Budget to assist in purchasing the technology equipment necessary to make this system, NORCOM, a reality.



Continuing transportation & traffic improvements

World-wide increases in the cost of concrete and steel wreaked havoc with the state's transportation capital plan, driving up overall costs by \$2 billion in the past couple of years. While there is no guarantee the increases will now level off, we succeeded in rearranging the use of revenue to ensure all projects now on the drawing board can be completed within the original time frame.



We are keeping our fingers crossed on the fall's RTID/SoundTransit 2 ballot initiative. With voter approval of those regional contributions, we can move forward on the SR 520 bridge replacement, the most critical piece of infrastructure in our district.

While we accomplished a lot, there is much more to be done to finally address our regional transportation woes. Rep. Fred Jarrett and I are poised with proposals on regional governance (HB 2101, ESSB 5803) that promise to be back for more discussion in the coming years. Stay tuned for more progress.

Rep. Ross HUNTER



Boosting student achievement a top priority

More than 40 percent of next year's graduating students are failing the math portion of the WASL. To me, this points to a system failure rather than a student failure. In light of this I spent most of the summer and fall in a bipartisan effort to create HB 1906, to improve math and science instruction. Over the next few years we will revamp our curriculum and re-write the math and science WASLs, as well as revisit standards for students in these areas.



While I'm pleased about improvements in math and science instruction, I'm disappointed about the Legislature's relaxing graduation standards. I supported a short delay in the math WASL requirement.

Unfortunately, the bill approved by the Legislature delayed it too long, until the class of 2013. All students must be exposed to a rich, rigorous curriculum that prepares them for a future in the global economy. Allowing young people to graduate without the skills necessary to succeed isn't a reasonable option to me – we should be providing additional support instead of lowering the standards.

Washington first to eliminate toxic flame retardants in our homes

For three years I've fought for a ban on a particularly noxious industrial chemical used as a flame retardant. This year, we finally passed it. Scientists are very concerned that this chemical, PBDE, causes neurological damage in children. The effort was one of the most difficult legislative tasks I've undertaken in my five years here, but our success now sets a model for how other states can do the same thing.



Difficult decisions - public funding for professional sports

The Seattle Sonics approached us for substantial public funding to build a new arena. As chairman of the House Finance Committee, I spent a lot of time examining their proposal. My priority: make sure the deal pencils out for the taxpayers.

My two main concerns with the stadium proposal presented to us:

- The funding mechanism resulted in very high financing costs, with many revenue streams not arriving until as late as 2021. By delaying payments for that long, the interest cost alone balloons from \$265 million to \$429 million.
- We know little about who will pay for what. The team wants \$275-300 million from the state and King County taxpayers, but never stated how much they are willing to pay. In addition, the proposed legislation said nothing about who is responsible for cost overruns, whether there should be a public vote, or who will manage the arena when it's done.

I would like to see the Sonics stay here, but as Finance Chairman it's my job to be a responsible steward of taxpayer money and make decisions that I can justify financially. I couldn't justify this one.

Sen. Rodney TOM



Supporting Washington's teachers

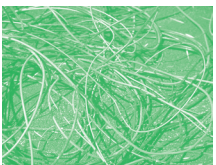
Public school teachers are among our state's most important professionals. This session, we supported our educators by giving them additional tools to succeed in their work and to develop new skills.

I was proud to sponsor the innovative Senate Bill 5955, which improves teacher training with comprehensive professional development, and creates a leadership academy for school principals and administrators. The academy will help our education leaders transform underperforming schools into places where students thrive.

The bill also establishes a program to recruit and mentor high school students from diverse backgrounds to enter the teaching profession. We know that students of color perform better academically in schools with a diverse teaching staff.

Metal theft bill helps curb drug crime

We often hear reports of copper wire and pipes, manhole covers, guard rails, and power lines being stolen from construction sites and our public facilities. Criminals who steal metal can exchange it for cash at a scrap yard, with few questions asked. A growing number of these thieves are looking for quick cash to feed their methamphetamine addiction.



The governor signed a bill I sponsored, Senate Bill 5312, to crack down on metal theft. My bill requires dealers to mail checks to their customers' homes 10 days after the transaction, giving law enforcement time to investigate suspicious activity and taking away the instant payment nature of these transactions. Most criminals won't willingly provide a home address where the police can easily find them.

With little inconvenience to legitimate customers and businesses, this new law will help curb drug crime, and save money for public utilities and businesses victimized by metal theft.

Harsher penalties for animal abandonment

You might remember news reports about the puppies abandoned in a trash bin near Issaquah. Those animals could have been taken to a shelter and quickly adopted.



Instead, their owner thoughtlessly abandoned them.

I'm happy to report that the Legislature passed a bill I sponsored this session to make the punishment fit this senseless crime.



Senate Bill 5227 clearly defines the crime of animal abandonment so prosecutors can more easily press charges, and increases the punishment to up to one year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

A terrible crime by itself, animal abandonment can start a downward spiral toward more serious violence; many of the most violent criminals have a history of harming innocent animals. While we can't always prevent troubled people from harming animals, I'm hopeful my bill will encourage people to take animals to a shelter instead of intentionally abandoning them.